

REVISED
2/9/09

JOINT PUBLIC WORKS / LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEES
January 19, 2009

Call to Order. Chair Yankee called the joint meeting of the Public Works and Land Conservation Committees to order at 6:00 P.M. on January 19, 2009 in the Courthouse Conference Center on the second floor of the Rock County Courthouse-East.

Committee Members Present: Public Works Committee: Supervisors Arnold, Bussie, Diestler, Ott and Yankee; Land Conservation Committee: Supervisors Arnold, Bostwick, Combs, Fizzell, Kuznacic, Sweeney, Wiedenfeld, and Mr. James Quade.

Committee Members Excused: None.

Staff Members Present: Craig Knutson, County Administrator; Jeffrey Kuglitsch, Corporation Counsel; Jeffrey Smith, Finance Director; Ben Coopman, Public Works Director; Lori Williams, Parks Director; Thomas Sweeney, Land Conservationist; Rob Baller, Parks Community Coordinator; Scott Heinig, Planning & Development Director; Randy Thompson, U.W. Extension Department Head.

Others Present: Supervisors Russ Podzilni, Sandra Kraft, Terry Thomas; Parks Committee, Gina Castro, Floyd Finney, Tom Presny; Tanya Zastro, Beloit; Tom Kautz, Milton; Julie Backenkeller, Janesville; Dean Paynter, Janesville; Ben Lawton, Janesville; Carolyn Brandeen, Janesville; Nancy Stabb, Janesville; Tammy VanPamel, Clinton; Rod Timp, Clinton; Mel Jones, Clinton; Shirley May, Milton; Tracy Porter, Milton; Cricket Jewett, Fort Atkinson; Diane Papcke, Milton; Neil and Kay Deupree, Janesville; John Lader, Janesville; Phyllis Anderson, Janesville; Suzie Smith, Brodhead; Al Hill, Johnstown.

Adoption of Agenda. Supervisor Arnold moved approval of the agenda, second by Supervisor Diestler. ADOPTED.

Establishment of Ground Rules for the Meeting. Mr. Kuglitsch went over the ground rules for the meeting, stating that any action would need a motion and a second, explained that the committees would act separately if they could not reach a consensus, and these resolutions would go on to the County Board. Chair Yankee added that the meeting will be conducted according to Roberts Rules.

Discussion of Distribution of American Transmission Company Environmental Impact Fees. Ms. Williams stated their 2003 – 2008 Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) plan created a vision for the Parks Division with recommendations on development of the parks. The proposed 2009 – 2014 POROS plan continues the vision and develops the goals and objectives for implementation. They have identified \$10,745,000 of possible enhancements for the parks system (attached), which far exceeds the \$1,800,000.

Supervisor Bostwick said the Land Conservation Committee had met and discussed what projects they felt were worthy of these funds and came up with three: 1) County Property Restoration for \$10,000; 2) Hazardous Waste Clean Sweep Program for \$150,000; and 3)



Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) for \$740,000 (see attached). These three projects total \$900,000.

Citizen Participation, Communications, Announcements, Information. Mr. John Lader, 3909 Wyoming Ct., Janesville, said the Clean Sweep Program has helped to keep hazardous chemicals out of the ground and the Towns Association has been very supportive of this program; it is well run, well managed, but under-funded. There is a group within Rock County who has been working on PDRs. To obtain grants for this program you need to have money available as match funds. The funding for this program is essential.

Mr. Dean Paynter, 2939 Afton Rd., Janesville, said he is in support of all the projects mentioned. The Rock Trail Coalition encourages work on the trail from Janesville along the Rock River, the railroad crossing north of Afton, control of invasive species and stream monitoring. The Green Rock Audubon has between 150-200 acres of restored wetland and prairies and encourages such projects.

Ms. Julie Backenkeller, 719 N. Grant Ave., Janesville, said maintaining the parks is very important. Parks have been on the short end of the stick for too long. Land preservation and conservation is very important too and Janesville has 10,000 acres of land marked for development. She felt the money should be divided evenly between Land Conservation and Parks.

Ms. Suzie Smith, 12618 W. Dorner Rd., Brodhead, said Magnolia Bluff Park and Gibbs Lake Park have been in need of improvement for a long time. The friends groups have done as much as they can but they can't do everything that is needed. An equestrian parking area, with enough area to turn around, handicapped toilets and a pavilion would be very much appreciated. She encouraged consideration of these funds to be used for these projects.

Possible Action on Distribution of American Transmission Company Environmental Impact Fees. Chair Yankee said instead of breaking the \$1.8 million down in percentages he would like to have it listed in dollar amounts.

Supervisor Bostwick said they have already listed their breakdown of the funds in dollar amounts totaling \$900,000.

Ms. Williams referred to the 2009 - 2014 projects the Parks Department listed for a total of \$10,745,000. Chair Yankee added that these are projects listed in the POROS plan.

Supervisor Bostwick asked what is the dollar breakdown for the individual projects they are looking at for the \$1.8 million?

Supervisor Ott said the parks provide a good quality of life and we have a good five year plan sitting on the shelf due to lack of funds. He added that he has not heard of any plan for Land Conservation.

Supervisor Fizzell said Land Conservation has been working on PDRs for some time and it is a pressing issue. He added that priorities need to be set and farmland preservation is a pressing issue, if we don't do something about it we will lose it. We have a one time shot and we need to do it right or forget about it.

Supervisor Ott said there is no approved plan for them before the County Board. Why doesn't Rock County have a land trust? He said they needed to educate people on this so they know what it is.

Supervisor Sweeney said on February 4th Rock County is holding a workshop at the Pontiac Center on PDRs, land conservation, farmland preservation, etc. The development of easements will be a subject at the workshop and the benefits to all will be discussed as well as how 4th, 5th and 6th generation farmers can take over and not lose the farm.

Chair Yankee asked if once the land goes into a trust is it forever? Supervisor Sweeney replied it is.

Supervisor Ott asked if and how the lady in La Prairie was compensated? Supervisor Sweeney replied, through federal tax credits.

Supervisor Bussie asked where did PDRs start out? Supervisor Sweeney replied the Farmland Preservation Program started in 1978 and a successful PDR program has been around about 30 years out east. Mr. Sweeney added, Bayfield has two programs and Washington, Jefferson, Sauk and Dane Counties are in the process of setting programs up. Supervisor Bussie said she had not heard of the program, but it sounds like a good program.

Chair Yankee asked if this is a tax program? Supervisor Sweeney replied persons who donate development rights of land receive a tax credit, which is spread over 15 years. For young farmers starting out it would be an opportunity for them to obtain money to pay off siblings and start out.

Supervisor Bussie asked if they had a plan to be approved before the County Board? Supervisor Sweeney replied they are in an education stage at this time, but they have been discussing it for some time and have hoped for seed money to get started.

Supervisor Combs said farmland preservation in Rock County has been a high priority since 1978 and, unfortunately, we have done a poor job. These are two worthy projects. A few years ago the County sent surveys out and 89% of the residents felt farmland preservation was the most important thing in Rock County. We need to take steps, formulate a plan and preserve farmland. We need to do all we can to protect some of the best farmland in the world.

Supervisor Ott asked if the funding of this program in the future would fall to the County or if the towns would be helping too? Supervisor Combs replied if they are going to have a County plan it should include towns, cities, villages as well as the County. We should all work together.

Supervisor Ott asked if the intent for future budget years is to ask for funding? Mr. Sweeney replied the intent of the program is to get staff in line, develop the program, obtain seed money and to then seek federal funds. The USDA will be increasing funds and the time is now to do this. They are redesigning the Farmland Preservation Program to dovetail with PDR to get more federal and state grant money. He added they do have an adopted Water Conservation Plan.

Supervisor Ott asked, once the plan is in place, are they planning on getting state and federal funding? The parks are up and running now so the \$1.8 million should go to the parks now and the next time the County gets money in it can go to Land Conservation.

Supervisor Sweeney asked Mr. Knutson if there has been money in past budgets that has not been spent?

Supervisor Wiedenfeld said he supports the program, that we have the opportunity for an educational workshop on February 4th and we owe it to the people of the County, and ourselves, to learn as much as possible. He added that he wants everyone to realize that Land Conservation is about preserving farmland for future generations.

Supervisor Arnold said that no one believes in land conservation more than she does, that what bothers her is if the PDR is such a good thing, why aren't more people in it?

Supervisor Bussie said she was on the Land Conservation Committee in the past and that they do not have a plan. Everything on the Land Conservation list is good but she is going to vote for parks.

Supervisor Sweeney said the conservation easement issue on the local level came from a meeting in Oconomowoc and he feels it is a good one. He added that he has yet to hear a dollar amount from Parks as to what part of the \$1.8 million they are asking for.

Chair Yankee asked where the \$740,000 came from, with Supervisor Sweeney replying \$17,000 for staff in 2009, \$3,000 for resources in 2009, \$240,000 for staff in 2010-2012, \$30,000 for resources in 2010-2012 and \$450,000 to bank for matching grant requests.

Chair Yankee asked if the staff would be permanent? Mr. Sweeney said they would be until 2012 and then, hopefully, with grant funds.

Supervisor Sweeney said he had not yet heard what portion of the \$1.8 million Parks Department was asking for. He moved to split the \$1.8 million between the two departments, second by Supervisor Combs.

Supervisor Ott said the Public Works Committee took the lead to pull the \$1.8 million out of the budget. Supervisor Sweeney said he made the motion and Supervisor Combs seconded the motion at the November 12th County Board meeting.

Supervisor Arnold asked how it read for the ATC funds? Mr. Kuglitsch replied, the Board voted for the funds to be placed in a segregated account to be reserved for use as a Parks and Land Conservation Fund.

Supervisor Fizzell said one option would be to use it for PDR.

Chair Yankee asked Mr. Kuglitsch where they go from here? Mr. Kuglitsch replied they could vote and Public Works Committee can agree or make their own recommendation. The Land Conservation Committee has a motion on the table to split the \$1.8 million, so roughly \$900,000 each.

Chair Yankee called for the Land Conservation Committee vote: Ayes – Mr. Quade, Supervisors Bostwick, Combs, Fizzell, Kuznacic, Sweeney and Wiedenfeld; Nays – Supervisor Arnold.

Chair Yankee moved for \$250,000 to go to Land Conservation and the rest to Parks, second by Supervisor Bussie.

Supervisor Sweeney said it seems the Public Works Committee feels some of the programs are less important than others. Chair Yankee said that is for them to decide and that the Public Works Committee feels the parks would be more beneficial to the citizens.

Supervisor Fizzell said that by offering only \$250,000 they are voting against farmland preservation.

Supervisor Bostwick asked how they arrived at \$250,000? Chair Yankee replied they felt this was a good ratio of what each of them needed.

Supervisor Kuznacic asked how they will decide on what gets funded? Chair Yankee said they would start with the 2009 listed projects for \$1,345,000 and after that then a budget carryover.

Supervisor Bussie said they had a conversation at their last meeting and discussed how they had to scavenge for money to fix the wells to make the water drinkable in some of the parks.

Supervisor Fizzell asked what the Parks Department's priorities were for their portion of the \$1.8 million?

Supervisor Combs said, according to their project list, they would like to spend \$1,345,000 in 2009. He asked them, for the 2010-2014 projects, where they anticipated the remaining \$9 million coming from? He asked about the projects funded in this year's budget? Mr. Knutson replied, they have remaining grant funds from 2001, which need to be spent this year or they lose them, for a number of parks projects in Beckman Mill Park. They also have \$185,000 budgeted, with deferred financing, for Carver Roehl entrance, Happy Hollow Park repaving of interior roadway, a vault toilet at Murwin Park and land acquisition.

Supervisor Ott requested Chair Yankee to call the question.
Supervisor Sweeney said this is their only time to argue these numbers.

Chair Yankee called for a vote from the Public Works Committee. Ayes: Supervisors Arnold, Bussie, Diestler, Ott and Yankee. Nays: None.

Adjournment. Supervisor Combs moved adjournment at 7:30 P.M., second by Supervisor Sweeney. ADOPTED.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bondehagen
Secretary II

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